AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims

1-13. (Cancelled)

14. (Original) A method of negotiating protocol options between first, second and third nodes in a telecommunications network using separated call control and bearer control protocols, the method comprising:

transmitting a first call control message from the first node to the second node specifying protocol options supported by the first node;

transmitting a second call control message from the second node to the third node specifying protocol options supported by both the first and second nodes; and

selecting a protocol option from the protocol options specified in the second control message.

15. (Original) A method according to claim 14, wherein said step of selecting a protocol option from the protocol options specified in the second control message is carried out by the third node.

16. (Original) A method according to claim 14, wherein each said call control message includes a preference level associated with each specified protocol option.

17. (Original) A method according to any one of claims 14, wherein the first node is an originating node.

18. (Original) A method according to any one of claims 14, wherein the third node is a terminating node.

19. (Original) A method according to any one of claims 14, which further includes determining whether the bearer level between the first and second nodes is affected by said selecting step, and if the bearer level is affected taking action to modify the parameters of the bearer level between the first and second nodes.

20. (Original) A method according to any one of claims 14, which further includes determining whether the bearer level between the second and third nodes is affected by said selecting step, and if the bearer level is affected taking action to modify the parameters of the bearer level between the second and third nodes.

21-26. (Cancelled)

27. (Original) A method of setting up a call connection between first and second mobile telephone networks at least one of which comprises a Tandem Free Operation (TFO) device located outside of the Radio Access Network part(s) of the mobile network and in which the Call Control protocol is independent of the bearer transport mechanism, the method comprising the steps of:

conducting a negotiation between said TFO device of one of the mobile networks and a peer TFO device of the other mobile network to determine a suitable speech codec; and

notifying said Radio Access Network of the determined speech codec by sending a Call Control (CC) message from the associated TFO device.

28. (Original) A method according to claim 27 wherein each of the mobile networks comprises a Tandem Free Operation (TFO) device located outside of the Radio Access network part(s) of the mobile network.

29. (Original) A method according to claim 27, wherein the two mobile telephone networks are coupled to one another via a PSTN.

30. (Original) A method according to claim 27, wherein said negotiation is carried out using the Codec Mismatch Resolution and Optimisation Procedure in the TFO protocol, with TFO messages being sent using in-band signalling.

31. (Original) A method according to claim 27, wherein said the or each TFO device located outside of a Radio Access network is located at a Gateway MSC (GMSC) which provides an interface between the mobile network and foreign networks.

32. (Original) A method according to claim 27, wherein the network in which the Tandem Free Operation (TFO) device is located outside of the Radio Access Network part(s) is a Universal Mobile Telecommunication System (UMTS) network, and the Radio Access Network is a UMTS Terrestrial Radio Access Network.

33. (Original) Apparatus for setting up a call connection between first and second mobile telephone networks at least one of which comprises a Tandem Free Operation (TFO) device located outside of the Radio Access Network part(s) of the mobile network and in which the Call Control protocol is independent of the bearer transport mechanism, the apparatus comprising:

means for conducting a negotiation between said TFO device of one of the mobile networks and a peer TFO device of the other mobile network to determine a suitable speech codec; and

means for notifying said Radio Access Network of the determined speech codec by sending a Call Control (CC) message from the associated TFO device.

34. (Original) A method of setting up a call connection between first and second mobile telephone networks each of which comprises a Tandem Free Operation (TFO) device located outside of the Radio Access Network part(s) of the mobile network and in which the Call Control protocol is independent of the bearer transport mechanism, the mobile networks being coupled via a Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN), the method comprising the step of:

conducting a negotiation between two mobile terminals subscribing to the first and second mobile networks respectively to determine a suitable speech codec, wherein the negotiation is conducted using Call Control protocol signalling messages exchanged between the Radio Access Network parts and the respective TFO devices, and ISUP messages sent between the TFO devices.

35. (Original) A method according to claim 34, wherein a list of codecs which are available to an originating mobile network are sent from the TFO device of that network to the peer TFO device using an ISUP Initial Address Message (IAM) and the selected codec is returned to the originating network in a subsequent ISUP message.

36. (Original) Apparatus for setting up a call connection between first and second mobile telephone networks each of which comprises a Tandem Free Operation (TFO) device located outside of the Radio Access Network part(s) of the mobile network and in which the Call Control protocol is independent of the bearer transport mechanism, the mobile networks being coupled via a Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN), the apparatus comprising:

means for conducting a negotiation between two mobile terminals subscribing to the first and second mobile networks respectively to determine a suitable speech codec, wherein the negotiation is conducted using Call Control protocol signalling messages exchanged between the Radio Access Network parts and the respective TFO devices, and ISUP message sent between the TFO devices.